

CITY ATTORNEY SELF-EVALUATION

JULY 1, 2015

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR FY 2014/15

At my last review, I set a number of goals for my department. All of the goals have been accomplished and are discussed individually below.

- **Provide training to City employees to reduce the City's exposure to legal liability.**

In the last year, the City Attorney's Office presented training on bankruptcy issues because failing to comply with legal restrictions that come into place upon the filing of a bankruptcy can result in liability to the debtor. The office also provided Open Meeting Law training to board and commission liaisons to reduce the risk of inadvertent violations of the statute. Legal updates on developing issues were provided to the Police Department. In addition, training on a series of real estate related issues was provided to the Real Estate Department by way of assisting it with undertaking its new duties.

- **Streamline public records request processes.**

The process of responding to public records requests has been substantially enhanced by the acquisition and application of a software program that allows for a more efficient review of documents. Some of the major advantages of this program include:

- Identifies duplicate emails and eliminates all but the original.
- Allows for tagging of documents as they are reviewed so all responsive documents are assembled automatically at the end of the process.
- Allows word searching of all assembled documents so that those with a specific term can be placed together automatically.
- Allows Bates labelling of all responsive documents electronically.
- Eliminates the need to make paper copies in order to redact confidential information.

The time savings gained from using this program makes it possible for public records requests, which are becoming more voluminous and more complicated all the time, to be processed quickly and accurately without having to add personnel.

- **Focus additional resources towards domestic violence issues.**

Every year, the prosecutors and victim advocates receive the training necessary to stay informed on the constantly evolving areas of law relevant to the services they

provide. This year, in addition to that training, additional resources were put into providing training on domestic violence issues, including:

- Special classes on signs of strangulation and how to prosecute it.
- Classes by the Arizona Coalition to End Domestic Violence and APAAC's Domestic Violence: Emerging Issues and Strategies.
- Arizona Coalition for Victim Services classes on risk assessment for domestic violence victims.

The City's leadership in this important area was recognized when the City's Domestic Violence Action Team, which includes the Victim Advocates and the Domestic Violence Prosecutors, received the Arizona Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award this year.

- **Streamline process for reviewing WestWorld event contracts.**

As the number of WestWorld events has grown, my office has developed form contracts and extensive issue checklists for recurring types of events. This has made it possible for staff to quickly identify what issues might be unique to an event and to deal with them effectively and expeditiously, rather than having to negotiate a different contract for each event.

As always, the office had a busy year in civil litigation, opening 32 new files, resolving 23 pending matters, and recovering approximately \$260,000 for the City in contested fees and taxes. The City Attorney's Office staff handled approximately 90% of the litigation. Among some notable successes this year were obtaining a voluntary dismissal by the Plaintiff in a federal civil rights case, and having the court enter summary judgment in the City's favor in the challenge to the City's right to make improvements at its McDowell Mountain Golf Course.

The results from the office's client satisfaction survey were very positive. One hundred and twenty-two responses were received and over 95% of them rated the office's performance as either excellent or very good.

GOALS FOR FY 2015/16

- Now that the City's Real Estate Department is fully staffed and implementing its strategic plan, my office will work with that Department to develop forms and best practices that will streamline their work and provide consistency in the City's real estate procedures.
- The City's increased use of body cameras by the Police Department will create some administrative challenges for the City's use of this substantially increased amount of data in both civil and criminal litigation. My office over the coming year will develop and implement best practices to make sure the City and the citizens

achieve the maximum benefit from the use of body cameras, while at the same time dealing effectively with the administrative burdens that arise from the large amounts of data the cameras generate.

- I intend to continue my office's focus on prosecution and victim assistance in domestic violence cases. Because the City is often involved at an early stage in such matters it can have a positive impact on the outcomes when it acts skillfully and engages fully. As noted above, the City's Domestic Violence Action Team was recognized for its abilities in this area, and I want to build on that success this year to make sure Scottsdale continues to be a leader in this important area.